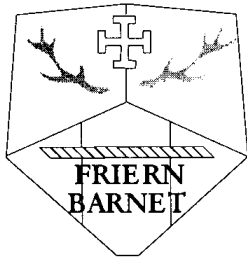


# Friern Barnet & Whetstone Residents' Association



November 2010

## Friern Barnet and Whetstone Residents' Association

- We are non-political
- We work for all residents in the area
- We discuss issues with Local Councillors and Council Officials
- Associated with the following bodies
  - The Federation of Residents' Association of Barnet
  - The Finchley Society
  - Friends of Friary Park
  - North Finchley Local Agenda 21
  - The Friern Barnet & District Local History Society
  - Coppetts Wood Conservationists
  - The London Green Belt Council

## Residents celebrate Friary Park centenary

With 2010 being the centenary of Friary Park, many of the Association's members were looking forward to seeing how this year's Friern Barnet Summer Show was going to celebrate the milestone. The actual anniversary was on 7<sup>th</sup> May, which was the day after the local and General Elections, so it made sense not to have any event taking place during that particular week.

Committee members from the Residents' Association teamed up with Friern Barnet & District Local History Society, the Friends of Friary Park and Agenda 21, to form a smaller committee to help Rev. Adrian Benjamin, put on a centenary event at this year's Summer Show. Over two years of planning went into the two days of the Summer Show on 21st & 22nd August.

But there was a wider dimension to consider too: three years ago, a group from the Friends of Friary Park had been invited to Okehampton in Devon by their Town Council to help them celebrate the centenary of Simmons Park. Sydney Simmons donated money for a park in his hometown and the Friends had gone as official guests. The 2010 Friary Park committee wanted to reciprocate the hospitality they had received, in style.

Mayor and Mayoress of Okehampton Michael and Mary Morse came, together with Cllr. Christine Marsh who is Chair of Devon County Council and was the main organiser for the Simmons Park celebrations. They were joined by Margaret and Derek Woolcott, two Okehampton residents.

The centenary marquee – named 'Past, Present and Future' – as well as being home to the four organising groups also had stands for the Local History Society, your Association, Incognito Theatre Group, Finchley Society, Whetstone Society, Greenacre Times, and the Spike Milligan Statue Fund among others.

The Wren Academy displayed their project about Edwardian times in the marquee. Local primary schools All Saints, St. John's N11, Queenswell primary and junior and Sacred Heart had their drawings and paintings with Friary Park as the theme on display. There was also a large table of historical artefacts. In the marquee, there were display panels

depicting life in and around the park over the last one hundred years. The whole 'room' was filled with pictures and local interest items.

Over the two days there was a baby show, a dog show and an animal farm. There were children go-karting and children's races. Pride of place this year went to Acqubatics – the dancing fountains which had music being played from each of the ten decades



Local "Edwardians" Pat Berguer, Mel Hooper and David Berguer

since the park came into being and The Swingsters troupe danced on a special 'stage'. There were numerous people dressed up in Edwardian costume.

The Horticultural marquee didn't seem as full as usual, but the exhibits lacking in quantity more than made up for it in quality—everything from a hand-made quilt to an octopus made from vegetables!

On day two, after lunch, the Mayor and Mayoress of Okehampton were driven into the park arena with the Mayor and Mayoress of Barnet, to be welcomed by 'Sydney and Annie Simmons' doubles. Amongst their duties was to take part in a Donkey Derby! There was also a presentation by the two mayors of a dedicated tree and plaque for Friary Park and a specially commissioned statuette of the Peacemaker statue for Okehampton.

The Okehampton visitors expressed their gratitude and joy at having met so many friendly people, and wished they could have stayed longer. They missed getting wet in the evening when the dancing fountains were again in evidence, but with coloured lights, fireworks and VERY HEAVY RAIN!

# Council plans traffic chaos for Friern Barnet

Barnet Council are proposing roadworks at the Tesco Colney Hatch Lane intersection which will cause months of traffic misery for Friern Barnet residents. Local residents know that taking out one lane in Colney Hatch Lane for minor roadworks causes congested chaos in the major Friern Barnet roads—Colney Hatch Lane, Friern Barnet Lane, Woodhouse Road and Friern Barnet Road.

Somebody in the Council obviously looked at the current congested situation on Colney Hatch Lane and decided that something could be done about it. They thought that traffic flow could be improved by tinkering with some of the roads and pavements near to the Tesco-Colney Hatch Lane entrance.

For example, one change that the Council want to make is to “*ban the right turn out of the southern Poplar Grove/Colney Hatch Lane junction and to extend the central reserve preventing access to the Tesco car park from this junction. This will prevent vehicles from using the Tesco car park entrance in order to exit right into Colney Hatch Lane.*” What this means is that motorists exiting from the Tesco car park directly on to Colney Hatch Lane will travel north to the Firs Lane roundabout, do a 180 degree turn and then head south down Colney Hatch Lane—site observation has identified that this is what some motorists do already.

Conforming to their formal duties and obligations, the Council placed an advertisement in the local paper, and wrote to the residents nearby in Firs Avenue and Poplar Avenue. What the Council has not taken into account is that a large number of residents of Friern Barnet would be adversely affected by the proposed changes.

The proposals do not seem to take into account that there are major roadworks taking place on the North Circular Road. For years Friern Barnet residents have suffered indirectly from the congestion in the Bounds Green stretch of the North Circular Road. Vehicles have made their way through Friern Barnet in the hope of shortening their journey times. Residents know that avoiding congestion on the North Circular has caused congestion in Friern Barnet, focussed on the roads intersecting at the old Friern Barnet Town Hall.

The welcome and necessary enhancement to the North Circular in the Bounds Green section has meant roadworks causing even greater congestion on the North Circular and consequently greater congestion in the Friern Barnet area. For even more motorists now leave the North Circular via the Tesco slip road to avoid the North Circular congestion.

## Completion of North Circular Road enhancement

The North Circular roadworks are due for completion by Spring 2012, however, improvements will be seen before then, as various sections near completion and the additional road space is brought into use. So, by about Summer 2012 residents will see a change in traffic patterns, as motorists get used to a less congested North Circular Road.

One of the changes the Council wants to make is at the pedestrian crossing outside Tesco on Colney Hatch Lane. The Council say “*that the existing tactile arrangement at the pedestrian crossing near the Poplar Grove/Colney*



*Cars for sale parked half on the pavement and half on the Tesco entrance slip effectively reduce the road width. This means that vehicles using the road to exit onto Colney Hatch prevent other vehicles from entering Tesco (causing further congestion on Colney Hatch Lane).*

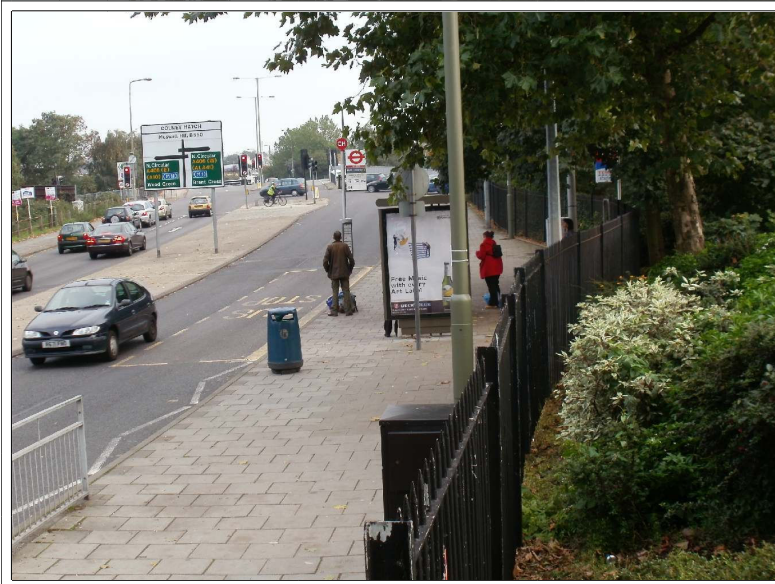


*Cars for sale that are parked partially on the private slip road and part on Colney Hatch Lane, reduce the width of road available for traffic—this does not help congestion with northbound vehicles.*

*Hatch Lane southern junction does not meet the current Department for Transport guidelines on mobility requirements for the visually impaired. It is therefore proposed that the existing tactile arrangement at this crossing is amended to better cater for the visually impaired.”* We applaud this proposed change and hope that it will not involve taking out a lane of the road while changes are being made.

So, with the exception of the enhancement to the zebra crossing, why are the Council pressing ahead with these misconceived roadworks in the Tesco Colney Hatch Lane area? Your committee has written formally to the Council pointing the errors in its detail and in its strategy for dealing with a local road congestion problem.

*The Council proposes extending the island in the middle of Colney Hatch Lane, so that it extends past the entrance to the southern access to Poplar Grove. The intention here is to prevent motorists turning right when exiting (legally or illegally) from the Tesco-Colney Hatch Lane access road. Motorists who want to turn right, and head for the North Circular or towards Muswell Hill, will have to travel north up Colney Hatch Lane and use the roundabout at Firs Avenue to head south.*



*It is proposed to reinstate the bus pull-in by the bus stop outside Tesco on the north bound Colney Hatch Lane. The old pull-in was removed because bus drivers said that other road users would not let them pull out into the traffic stream. This selfish behaviour by other motorists caused delay to bus passengers on their journeys. The roadworks to install a pull-in will mean taking out one lane of the road for weeks rather than days.*

*Currently the southern access to Poplar Grove allows local residents to enter and exit. The Council's proposed change is to allow exit only from the southern access to Poplar Grove.*



## Book Review

### The Friary Park Story by Mel Hooper

Whilst our Residents' Association carries a large number of members, who are content to consider it as a kind of vague secondary insurance outfit, the Friern Barnet & District Local History Society, is a far livelier body whose birth had something explosive about it, as it fills an obvious need in the community. At any time it combines the eager talents of excellent organisers, careful researchers, lonely specialists and all who applaud a meaningful social focus point which stimulates and supports some desire to learn.

Mel Hooper was probably drawn into its orbit by his very active wife, Helen, without whom the society would lack a powerful warm binding force. But I doubt that he, or any of his friends, suspected that, in addition to financial and organising abilities, he had a gift for authorship.

His recently published, most readable A4 paperback "*The Friary Park Story*" is an eye opener even for those

of us locals who have lived hereabouts for many decades. It covers, with an unexpected fluency, centuries of local history, produces outstanding images of the past and supplies a fascinating document, an amazing assembly of names and events, which have contributed to the formation of a ground of long established recreation.

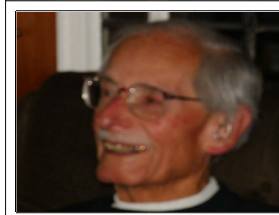
Friary Park offers ancient trees in unusual variety, calm areas for reflection, sports facilities which all attract enthusiasts. In Friary House, which is undergoing a range of well-planned internal renovations, there is a most useful café and restaurant which enables families to enjoy a substantial range of meals, whilst supervising their youngsters at play in the well furnished area opposite.

Big questions are answered. How big is the Park? Where Elizabeth the first came in – or Queen Anne? If there really *is* a secret passage to St James Church? Who gave us the Park? How it almost got built over? Why it *didn't*? How "Patent Steam Carpet Beating" came to finance it? Why the grand opening scheduled for 7 May 1910 was delayed? The year its house was built? Where the boating pond was, and duck island, and the grandstand, and the heated greenhouse with the goldfish pond down the middle? How many trees of how many species

are growing there? Who *owns* the Park? "The Park to be forever maintained by and at the expense of...." whom?

I was struck on reading and thoroughly enjoying Mel Hooper's book by the wide range it covers and the modesty of its author: the amount of original research must have unearthed a wealth of facts and ancient photographs which were not easy to group.

One's mind is full of admiration for the original courage that persuaded the author that finding time for the intense research and filing into shape of such a rich tale could ever be found, in their full lives in the community; a community which now recommends its varied members a book for which readers will feel truly grateful to Mel Hooper and the Friern Barnet and District Local History Society for its far reaching contribution to our lives.



Guest reviewer—Karl Ruge

"The Friary Park Story" can be obtained from Friern Barnet & District Local History Society, 46 Raleigh Drive, Whetstone, London N20 0UU, – cost is £5.86 (includes p&p).

### Forthcoming Events

#### Friern Barnet Library:

Wednesday 17 November

#### "A Trip to Venice and Milan"

All coffee mornings are from 10.30 – 11.30

#### Friern Barnet and District Local History Society:

"A Short History Of Pantomime" by Marlene McAndrew: Wednesday 24 November

#### Christmas Party

Wednesday 8 December

All meetings take place at St John's Church Hall, next to Whetstone Police Station, Friern Barnet Lane. Starts 7.45 p.m.; cost £2 to non-members.

**Incognito Theatre: Theatre closed for refurbishment  
next production March 2011**

#### Church Farm Museum

9 October 2010 - 9 January 2011

#### 'A Sin But Not A Crime': the Restoration and the Regicides

The Museum is also displaying (for the first time in London), an exhibition on loan from the Cromwell Museum at Huntingdon on the grim fate of those signatories to the death warrant of Charles I in 1649, after the restoration of Charles II in 1660.

#### Barnet Walks with Paul Baker

Sunday 12 December 2:00 pm

#### 'The Heart of High Barnet' A historical walk through High Barnet

Meet at the junction of the Great North Road and Hadley Green Road. Price £7 (under 12s £3)

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